SBIR Technical Questions for NIH

January 14, 2004

1. In the Dec. 23 issue of "Inside eRA for Partners," there is the following statement highlighted in yellow:

> **NIH Prepares to Expand Electronic Application Pilot**
> The eRA team, benefiting from the experience of the October/November electronic grants pilot, is preparing for the next round of receipt dates. NIH will accept a few dozen e-applications from service providers for new and competing continuation Academic Research Enhancement Awards (due January 25), new research grants (due February 2), and competing continuation research grants (due March 1). The pilot will be limited to simple grants with modular budgets.
>
> 1A. Are these AREA proposals different from the new and competing mod grants that we've submitted in the October and November pilots? Do they use the mod grant 398 form set?

Answer:

> **Since the January release was postponed until February, the AREA (Academic Research Enhancement Awards) will not be included in the phase II (Feb-March 2004) pilot. Just to clarify for the future, these types were not part of the Oct/Nov 03 pilot and they are submitted on the PHS398 form. For more information of receipt dates and types of grant applications refer to the following website:** http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/submissionschedule.htm

2. What has been done to correct the problem with form fields in PDFs not being properly reconstituted in the application image? This problem was reported for both the October and November pilots.

Answer:

> **We are assuming that this refers to the fact that certain elements of boilerplate information need to be embedded in the PDF attachment to result in an acceptable application image. What we've done to address this problem is that we have posted a set of instructions and templates on the NIH eRA Partnership Page, under the heading "Grant Assembly Instructions and Forms" (http://era.nih.gov/Projectmgmt/SBIR/dev/). Any boilerplate information that must be provided by the service provider, within an attachment, is discussed in these sections.**
>
> **If this is not what the question was referring to, please clarify so that a more suitable answer may be provided.**

3. Form Page 2 page shows a "Performance Site" section, which was asked to be removed from previous submissions. Does this section still need to be excluded from the attachment supplied by the service provider, or should we now supply form page 2 with this section? If we are supposed to leave the section, do we populate it with the data or will that be handled by during the generation of the grant image? The instructions (Form_Page_2_Assembly_Instructions_12-22-2003.pdf) make no mention of the performance site section.

Answer:

> **The assembly instructions for page 2 are in error and will be corrected. The only information that should be included in this attachment is the "Description" section for page 2. The**

performance site and key personnel sections must not appear in the attachment, since these will be generated automatically for the application image, using the structured XML information.

4. The Resources page is not split into two documents, one for facilities and a separate for the major equipment. The sample form provided by NIH has all the facilities sections as well as the major equipment section on the same form. Does this mean that we are suppose to use this form for both pages, and only provide the sections on the facilities version, leaving the major equipment blank? On the flip side, should the major equipment form provide only the section for major equipment, and leave all the facilities section blank? Or are we suppose to separate the major equipment sections and the facilities sections so they are on their own form?

Answer:

To clarify this issue, two format pages will be provided on the Partnership page. There should be one format page for the facilities attachment, which should include the "Resources" banner and the "Facilities" section itself. The second format page should present the required boilerplate text for the "Major Equipment" section only. These will be changed and re-posted to the NIH eRA Partnership Page very soon.

Also, in answer to the question regarding which version to send on paper, we are not requesting paper copies at this time.

5. When including biographical sketches for personnel that do not have a commons identifier, is there a naming convention for the Key Personnel listed, that do not have commons account identified in their **KeyPerson** element?

Answer:

We assume that this question is referring to Appendix I of the "Packaging an Electronic Grant Application" document, where a table provides the recommended names of each of the expected binary attachments. The only convention is that the names start with "Phc_" for each Positions/Honors/Citations attachment, and start with "rsupport_" for each Research Support attachment. The remainder of each attachment's name is up to the service provider. The only requirement is that the person to whom each pair of attachments applies must be identified in a unique way (i.e., don't use the same suffix for two different people).

Whether a key person has a Commons Identifier or not really has no bearing on the naming of the attachment, unless this is a convention that the service provider has adopted itself.

6. Is there a naming convention for file identifiers in the **NonKeyPersonBiographicalSketch** element?

Answer:

The answer here is essentially the same as for #5 above. Beyond the requirement that each biosketch attachment be named with the prescribed prefix, it is up to the service provider's discretion to assign the remainder of the attachment name in a meaningful way, uniquely for each person submitted.

7. Is the Table of Contents still going to be part of the Grant Application Image as a blank document, or will it no longer appear in the application image?

Answer:

It will no longer appear in the application image.

The issue will be revisited in a later release. Eventually the TOC will be added back in.

8. When documents on the Web site change, can there be a flag (other than the date) that indicates a document has changed?

Answer:

We are planning to change the Web site to include "Last Updated on mm/dd/yyyy at hh:mi" indication at the top of the Web page. Then there will be a label of "NEW" beside each updated (or newly added) link. Additionally, each document will have a version number, date and time as the header of the document.

9. Based on the email, January 6, 2004, from Svetlana Diggs delaying the participation in Phase II, will a revised "Timeline for CGAP Pilot Phase II" document be released?

Answer:

This documented has been updated and should be posted on the eRA Partnership Information Web page by Jan. 15.

10. Will it ever be possible for the ticket request and validation request to have the same message identifiers?

Answer:

The validation service is a separate system so cannot share ticket numbers with the "live" submission system. However, the same local proposal identifier can be submitted for validation and submission purposes and be tracked by the submitter if you want to connect these. When a ticket is submitted with a local proposal identifier (either on the validation or submission systems), this same identifier will be returned to the submitter in the response message.

The local identifier is a pass through at NIH and is present only for the Service Provider to use for their needs.

11. Will the rules validation process be synchronous or asynchronous? What is the URL for this service (Test and Production)?

Answer:

Asynchronous. The URLs for test and production will be:

TEST: https://valxchg.test.era.nih.gov

PROD: https://valxchg.era.gov

12. Will a Web service be available for the service providers to query for the status of the application? If so when and what is the URL (Test and Production)?

Answer:

This facility is already available, via the status request. The URL for the status service is the same as the one used for submitting a ticket; however, instead of submitting a ticket request message, you would submit a status request message.

13. Can the service provider be notified either via email or through a Web service to acknowledge that an application has moved on to the Review board?

Person Information Web Service

As stated by NIH, a Web Service will be developed and made available to service providers, allowing access to certain key elements of a PI's Commons PPF. The Web service should make available the following information:

- Full name (last, first, middle, prefix, suffix)
- Degree set (degree code, other degree text for each)
- Contact information, related to this person's employment at the applicant organization, which includes street address, city, state, and zip code, country (ISO-3166 code), phone number, fax number and email. Multiple occurrences may be returned, depending upon the number of addresses that the PPF reflects for this particular person, at that organization.
- Position title (most recent for the applicant organization)

Input to the Web service will be the Commons User ID and the DUNS number of the applicant organization. The Commons User ID will point to the appropriate PPF entry, whereas the DUNS number will point to the pertinent employment (contact) information within the indicated PPF.

Answer:

The assignment of an application to a scientific review group is an action that is reflected in the application status. As mentioned in the response to question 12, a facility for obtaining application status does already exist and is available for use.

Currently, the PI receives notification. This may become a transaction in a future release.

14. Can this Web service allow the service provider to maintain the personnel data in the Commons PPF.

Answer:

No, not at this time.

15. Will the service be synchronous?

Answer:

The Web service for person information is synchronous.

16. Will this be available for the February 1 deadline?

Answer:

Yes. But, since the pilot release has been moved to February 13, the deadline for receipt is March 1.

17. What is the URL for test and production?

Answer:

URLs for the validation service were provided earlier, in response to question 11. The URLs for all other CGAP exchange messages will be:

TEST—https://infoxchg.test.era.nih.gov

PROD—https://infoxchg.era.nih.gov

18. As stated by NIH, the grant image produced by the electronic submission is now going to be available to the PI, in the Commons, immediately after the submission is accepted.

18A. Can the service provider receive the application image back in the response message when the "UniqueID" for the application is assigned, and when any corrections are submitted?

Answer:

No, we did not change this from the last pilot. We may implement this change in a future release.

19. A server will be available for purpose of testing application submission. Instead of arch4 there will be a mirror of production, testing sample applications. There will be a requirement that all submissions be successfully submitted in the test environment before submitting to the production server.

19A. How will the data be maintained for the test server?

Answer:

We assume that this refers to the Commons PPF information related to the Principal Investigator. In these cases, we recommend that the data stream be submitted with the information that matches the production Commons account (information is obtainable through the new Person Information request). If the information in the test database does not match production, contact the NIH testing coordinator who will ensure that the test database is refreshed appropriately.

The test server is to test the software, not to test the data. Use the data as it exists when you retrieve it with the information service. We will not attempt to keep it synchronized with the production database. Validation goes against the production server without updates.

The validation service is to test the data in the grant application.

19B. What is the URL of the test server?

Answer:

This was addressed previously. Please refer to the responses to questions 11 and 17.

19C. Can we begin testing with the server, before it is "officially" open for testing?

Answer:

Yes, but prior arrangements must be made with the NIH testing coordinator, who will assess feasibility and suggest a timeframe for testing, based upon the internal development and test activities that are ongoing at the NIH.

We will make it available as soon as it is reasonably stable before it is fully tested but it will be at your own risk. We will take if down for code changes or config changes as needed with little or no notice.

20. The XML schema for the PHS398 structured data requires either an attachment file identifier or text for the Project Summary, Facilities Description, and Equipment Description. The validations document specifies that an attachment file identifier is required for each of these. I want to verify that this means no text data should be collected (outside of attachments) that correspond to these areas of the PHS-398 form.

Answer:

This is correct.

21. The status request message requires data for its organizationID and localID elements. Is the localID value the Trading Partner Identifier referenced in the CGAP reference definitions document, and what types of identifiers are these?

Answer:

Yes, this is the Trading Partner Identifier. This is a unique identifier assigned to each participating service provider upon registration with the NIH. If you do not currently have a trading partner identifier, one may be obtained by contacting the NIH administrator.

22. Can you give us some guidance as to what NIH application form items are the source of, or what information is being requested for the elements in the CGAP XML document for the following nodes:

All the nodes under nih:ProjectDescription/rar:ProjectSurvey; the node names are: CBQuestion, CBText, G3Question, G3Text, G4Question, G4Text, G6Question, G6Text, G8Question, G8Text, EnvImpactQuestion, EnvImpactText, EnvExemptionQuestion, EnvExemptionCBText, H1Question, H1Text

rar:OrgAssurances/GeneralCertificationQuestion

rar:OrgAssurances/rar:SBIRSurvey/Question8A

Answer:

None of these schema elements is required for a PHS 398 submission. For complete guidance on mapping the PHS 398 application to the corresponding schema elements, refer to the following documentation which is available on the NIH eRA Partnership Information page:

- **PHS 398 XML Schema Guide**
- **Mapping of Form PHS 398 to XML Document Structure**

Generally speaking, any schema element that is not specifically referenced by the mapping should be ignored. However, by convention, some schema elements are defined as mandatory even though they do not map to the PHS 398 form. The mandatory attribute in these cases is mandated by the Research and Related data definitions that we are inheriting and do not represent an NIH requirement. We recommend that, in such cases, an empty tag be supplied (if token or string) or a zero in the case of a numeric element.

23. Who is the testing coordinator for Pilot 2?

Answer: NIH testing coordinator for Pilot 2: Krishna Collie 301-451-5963.

24. Currently, the NIH is not accepting electronically the 398 Full Budget modular grant applications. When will they be able to being testing for these?

Answer: Before these grants can be accepted, the Statement of Work needs to be put into place in the system. Most likely, they will be accepted next October, but not in the next submission.

25. Will a timeline be issued that includes the release of the Web service?

Answer: Yes, there will be a whole package of information released after January 23 and we will notify all Service Providers.